



NHS

**Surrey and Borders
Partnership**
NHS Foundation Trust

Recovery College Newsletter

Week 4: Be Active

15th April 2020





OUR MESSAGE FOR THIS WEEK

This week's newsletter is all about ways to **BE ACTIVE**, another one of the 5 ways to wellbeing.

We're looking at how exercise affects the mind and body, it's much more than just burning calories!

We have plenty of suggestions for how to exercise without leaving your home. This is relevant for everyone right now, those who are shielding or self isolating, and others who are being asked to leave their homes for exercise just once a day. We're also looking ahead to when this time passes and we can all get outside again.

We're also thinking about the barriers that get in the way when it comes to physical activity, and how we can overcome them.

The Recovery College team have shared how they're keeping active at the moment. We'd love to hear from you on our Facebook page with your exercise tips.

<https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

Best Wishes
India and Wendy
(Senior Clinician) (Senior Recovery Coach)

"If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented"

Dr Nick Cavill

"Adults should move more and sit less throughout the day. Some physical activity is better than none. Adults who sit less and do any amount of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity gain some health benefits."

CDC



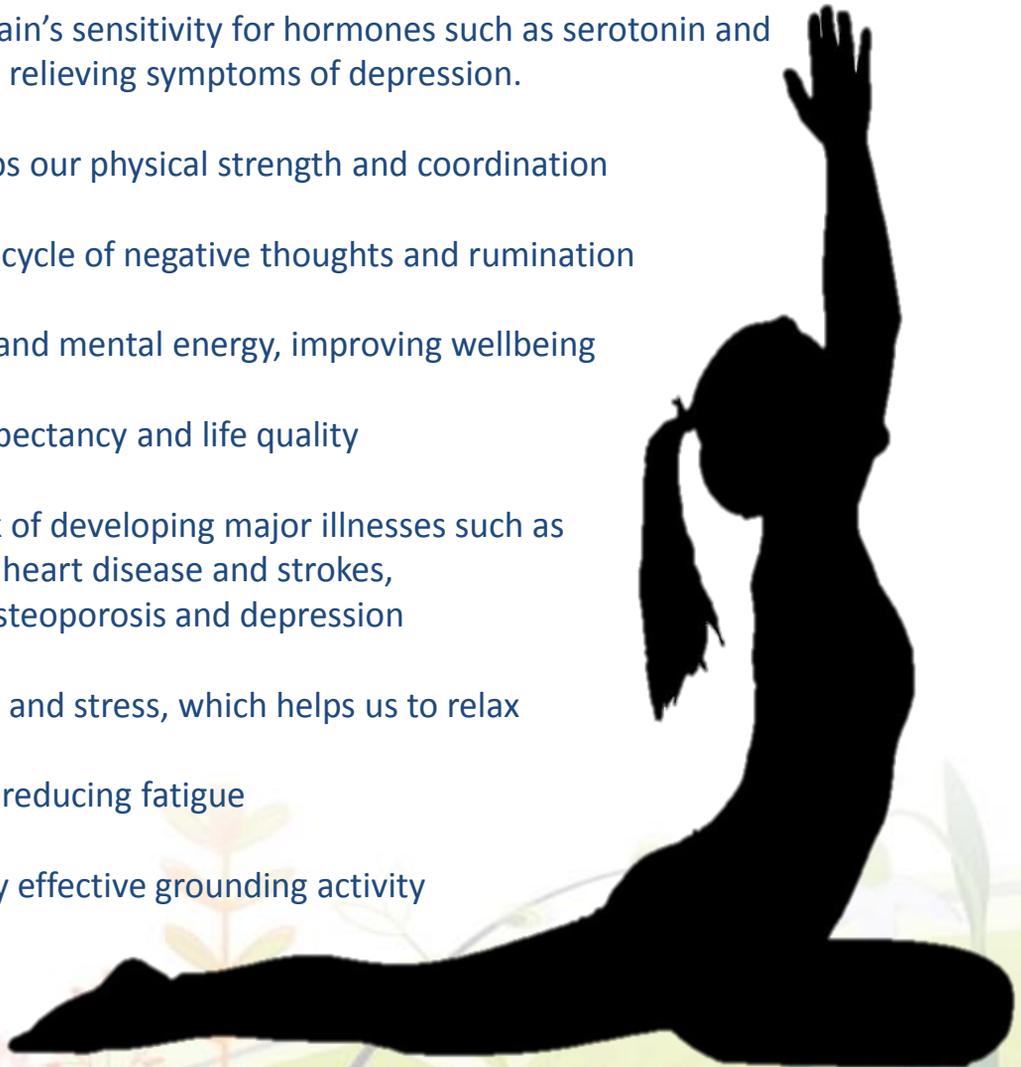
WHAT HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE EXERCISE?

Our heart rate increases, sending more oxygen rich blood around the brain and body. Our muscles and body work harder.

Our brains release endorphins. Endorphins are powerful, energising, feel good chemicals that induce feelings of calm, happy and wellbeing. They help you concentrate and feel mentally sharp. Exercising regularly helps endorphins to regulate and improve our mood.

Exercise has a wide range of effects, including:-

- Increases our pain tolerance and helps us practice endurance
- Increases the brain's sensitivity for hormones such as serotonin and norepinephrine, relieving symptoms of depression.
- Exercise develops our physical strength and coordination
- Helps break the cycle of negative thoughts and rumination
- Boosts physical and mental energy, improving wellbeing
- Improves life expectancy and life quality
- Reduces the risk of developing major illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and strokes, some cancers, osteoporosis and depression
- Relieves tension and stress, which helps us to relax
- Improves sleep, reducing fatigue
- Exercise is a very effective grounding activity





NEUROPLASTICITY

It was once thought that when we became adults, the brain was fixed, unchangeable and unable to heal itself; that the loss of brain cells was permanent and we were stuck with any damage that had happened.

One of the most prominent findings in modern science is neuroplasticity; it has had wide ranging effects about the way we understand and treat the brain. Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change and heal itself in response to stimuli, to create new neural pathways to meet our needs.

For example, each time we learn something new (such as a dance step or someone's name) our brain creates a new pathway for that information. Either we practice that step or name, and strengthen our memory and ability to do it, or we don't. When we don't, the "wires" that once made the connection between our memory and ability become damaged or severed and the information is harder to recall.

This is why when we are learning a new skill, it is important to practice regularly; practicing a skill reinforces those pathways.

The Dalai Lama worked with Harvard University to study the effects of meditation on the brain. They found that meditation leads to different levels of activity in the brain associated with attention, anxiety, depression, fear, anger and our body's healing ability. This is as a result of the neuroplasticity changes in the brain caused by meditation.





BARRIERS TO EXERCISE

Even when we recognise that exercise is a good idea, we can still find it really hard to get started. It helps to work out what's holding you back, and see if you can find a way to make it work for you. Here are some reasons people might have for not exercising.

“I don't have time”

The recommended amount of exercise for an adult is 150 minutes per week, which can sound overwhelming. Many people suggest doing 30 minutes of exercise, 5 times a week, but if that still sounds too much, you can break it down into smaller chunks, like 10 minutes, three times a day.

Try keeping a diary for a week, listing all the things you get up to and how much time they take. You'll probably be able to identify slots where you have some spare time you could use to exercise. If getting fitter or staying healthy are important to you, you can find a way to prioritise physical activity and fit it in to your schedule.

“I'm too tired”

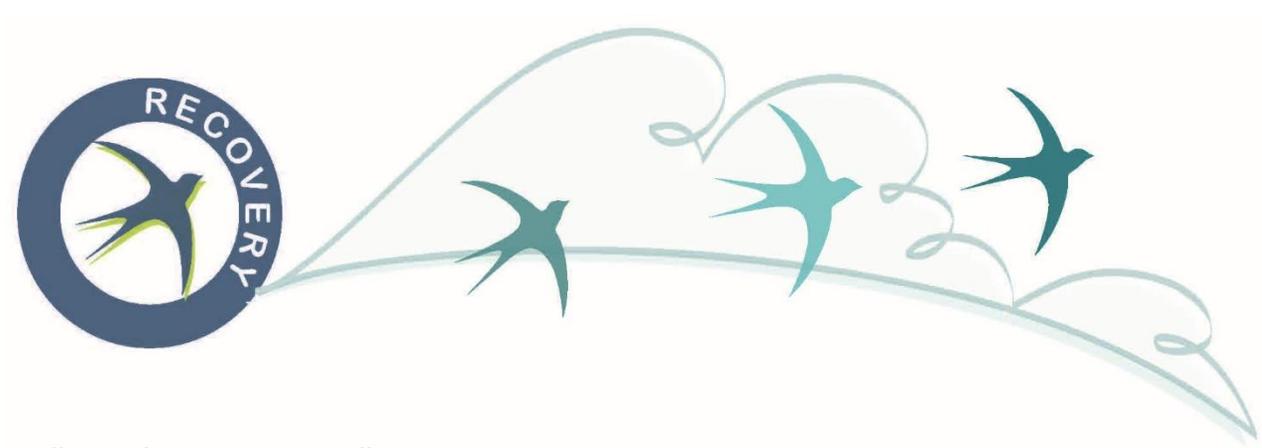
Try to schedule physical activity for the time of day when you feel most fresh and energised. For many people, this is in the morning. Sometimes the tiredness we're feeling is mental fatigue, rather than physical. Exercise is a powerful energiser. Once you get going, it can reduce fatigue and increase energy levels. If you're really tired then a 5 minute walk is better than not moving at all!

The more active you are, the fitter you'll become, and the more energy you'll have. Getting more sleep and eating healthily will also boost your energy levels.

“I just don't feel like it”

Remember why you wanted to exercise in the first place. Thinking about your personal reasons can motivate you.

Using an exercise app, like Couch to 5K, Active 10, or Google Fit can monitor and reward your progress. When social distancing measures are lifted, you could exercise with a friend or family member, or join a local walking group, running club, or fitness class. You're more likely to commit to regular exercise if you're sharing the experience with someone else.



“I don’t like exercise”

You’ll be much more likely to stick to a new exercise regime if you choose an activity you like. Exercise is just about moving more and sitting less. Try to remember what physical activities you enjoyed as a child and see if you can take those up again. It could be playing a team sport, swimming, roller skating, playing frisbee, trampolining, anything goes! You can make many activities more fun by listening to upbeat music, or try listening to a podcast on your phone while walking.

“It feels hopeless”

You can begin with something simple, like 5 minutes of gentle stretching, which will help to make you feel better. Set small, realistic goals for yourself, and start slowly, gradually increasing the length of time you spend exercising, and the level of intensity. The more you achieve, the more your confidence will grow.

No matter your age, weight or fitness level, there are people like you trying to get fit.

“Exercising hurts”

If you have a disability, arthritis, or any illness or injury that limits your mobility, speak to your doctor or healthcare provider about how you can exercise safely.

Don’t ignore pain, but do what you can. Try exercising in short spells, several times a day, if that helps.

When swimming pools reopen, try exercising in water so your body weight is supported, to reduce joint and muscle discomfort.

Warming up before you start and cooling down afterwards reduce the risk of injuring yourself.

A study of 26 healthy men and women who exercised regularly were split into 2 groups. One group continued to exercise as normal, whilst the others stopped. Those who stopped reported an increase in negative mood patterns.



There are 3 types of exercise:

Flexibility exercise

Stretching and lengthening the muscles, improving the range of motion.

Anaerobic exercise

Exercise working on and building strength and resistance. This includes yoga, pilates, lifting weights, using resistance bands, sit ups, press ups, lifting and carrying children.

Aerobic exercise

Using large muscle groups, we use up more oxygen than at rest. Improves cardiovascular endurance. This includes brisk walking, running, cycling, swimming, dancing, hiking, skipping.

For a fun activity, try putting on your favourite music and dancing around the room.

Chores count! Engage your core and focus on the muscles you are working as you go.

If you're lucky enough to have an outdoor space, gardening is a good workout.

The NHS has put together 24 videos by fitness experts to take you through a host of different activities. They range from aerobics, workouts for your waist, arms or legs, pilates for people with physical health problems, to belly dancing.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

Seated exercises are available if you have limited mobility .

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/>





Sport England have a list of online exercise options, many of which are free, or offering a free trial period.

https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#get_active_at_home

Fitness guru Joe Wicks is offering free live PE classes everyday weekday at 9am, and his YouTube channel offers lots of videos, including home workouts for seniors, fat burning routines, and a range of 20 minute workouts.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

If you've ever fancied taking up running but felt too intimidated by the task, the Couch to 5K program takes you through the process step by step from walking to comfortably running for half an hour in just 9 weeks.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k/>

10 minute stretching routines designed by older people, for those who are less mobile.

<https://10today.co.uk/>

The Active 10 walking tracker app can help you monitor your progress.

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/active10/home>

OUR COURSES

Courses are not currently running, but we are looking at new exciting ways to run courses remotely if the current situation continues for an extended period of time.

When our courses are back up and running, you can learn more about **BE ACTIVE** on the following courses:

- Introduction to Recovery and Wellbeing
- Energise and Relax

We'll let you know as soon as we have dates for running these courses again.



HOW ARE THE RECOVERY COLLEGE TEAM STAYING ACTIVE?

"I'm really lucky to live right next to a large wooded area so I go for an early morning walk with my two dogs Boo and Lulu. I use this time to practice **mindful walking**; taking in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest. This walk really helps me to find moments of peace in a hectic world." – Rebecca

"I am **cycling** every day with my kids as they are learning how to ride their bikes - we are not going very quickly yet but I'm sure I'll be soon having to pedal fast to keep up! We have also been using YouTube for **exercise videos** - Joe Wicks and JumpStart Jonny have certainly got us **leaping around** the lounge" – Nina

"I have been going out for a **walk** every day. Sometimes I really have to force myself to get out the door, but once I get moving, have a change of scene, and listen to the birds singing, I feel so much better." - Wendy

"We have got lucky, our neighbours still have to work so we are doing **doggy day care** with their 4paws, Banner. He is the lovely soppy dog that we look after when they go on holiday. He is our companion on our 1 **exercise** a day and my son **walks** him too so he is doing well at the moment!" - Georgie

"I've been going for a daily **walk**. I have also **played** in the garden with my son." - Colette

"I have been taking Lottie for a **walk** with no phone on me and really noticing the small things around me." – Rebecca (ROC)

I did an online **Zumba** class in my front room! - Lyndsey

"When ROC does have her phone on her, we have been on the phone to each other while **walking together** and catching up"- Moira

"I have been trying to do **10,000 steps** per day. Sometimes I achieve this and sometimes I don't. But having a goal means I've been **walking** more than I would otherwise. I have also been doing things like **gardening** and **washing the car** to increase the amount of time I'm moving per day" – Nicola

"I am **walking** Tizzie each day, and I have set up a little exercise area with some equipment to do **pilates** and **yoga**. I have also been practicing my **hula hooping** and doing (very occasional!) **circuits** in the garden. It turns out I am not good at not having set classes, so I have been making it easy for myself to do small bursts of activity" - India

Our Recovery Colleges in Surrey and North East Hampshire & Farnham help people improve their health and wellbeing through courses on a range of mental and physical health conditions.

You don't have to be referred to become a student at the Recovery Colleges. We are open to everyone and all you need to do is enrol, which is really easy to do.

To become a student simply complete and return an enrolment form which you can get by contacting us.

We would be delighted to see you at one of our courses and look forward to meeting you.

If you have any questions or need guidance on completing the enrolment form please get in touch and one of our team will be happy to help.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE RECOVERY COLLEGE

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/recoverycollege.nehantsfarnham/>

Webpage <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/recovery/recovery-college/>

Email recovery.college@sabp.nhs.uk

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